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Message Text

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15
ACTION DLOS-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 EUR-12 OMB-01 FEA-01 AID-05

CEQ-01 CIAE-00 COA-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 EPA-01

INR-07 L-02 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-03 RSC-01 OES-03

SS-15 SP-02 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 INT-05

JUSE-00 CIEP-01 CEA-01 ACDA-05 AEC-05 AGR-05 /120 W
---------- 018882
R 140645Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1832
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0180

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, SN, NY, ID
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING OF STRAITS COUNTRIES

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: SINGAPORE 0117

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM ADVISED SEVERAL MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON JANUARY 11 THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE WILL MEET IN SINGAPORE SOMETIME IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO DISCUSS POLICIES AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE. IT WAS CLEAR FROM HIS REMARKS THAT WHILE GOS WILL COOPERATE ON SAFETY AND ANTI-POLLUTION MATTERS, IT WILL OPPOSE ANY EFFORTS BY GOI AND GOM TO HAVE THREE COUNTRIES ADOPT POLICIES AND MEASURES WHICH WOULD VIOLATE EXISTING INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE SEA OR ADVERSELY AFFECT FORTHCOMING GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT DINNER GIVEN BY JAPANESE AMBASSADOR JANUARY 11, FOREIGN

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MINISTER RAJARATNAM DISCOURSED AT SOME LENGTH ON LAW OF THE SEA BEFORE SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN REPS NOT PRESENT. HE RAMBLED ON FOR MORE THAN A HALF HOUR, BUT FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST EMERGED:

(A) SHOWA MARU INCIDENT HAD GENERATED INDONESIA PRESSURES CALLING FOR MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE TO DISCUSS POLICIES AND PROBLEMS IN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE. RAJARATNAM RECALLED THAT PRIOR TO 1974 THERE HAD BEEN ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS FROM THREE COUNTRIES BORDERING THE STRAITS ON STRAITS PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, NONE HAD BEEN HELD IN 1974. IT WAS SINGAPORE'S TURN TO HOST THE CONFERENCE AND GOS HAD AGREED TO DO SO AT SOME CONVENIENT TIME DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS (PRESUMABLY PRIOR TO THE NEXT LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IN GENEVA).

(B) GOS IS SYMPATHETIC TO MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN CONCERNS OVER PROBLEMS OF TRAFFIC AND POLLUTION IN THE STRAITS AND GOS IS PREDISPOSED TO FAVOR MEASURES TO PREVENT POLLUTION AND INSURE SAFETY OF NAVIGATION. HE COMMENTED THAT GOS ALSO WAS NOT OPPOSED TO HAVING LARGE TANKERS USE LOMBOK STRAITS RATHER THAN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE. HE NOTED THAT THE LARGE TANKERS JUST SAIL PAST SINGAPORE AND BROUGHT NO BUSINESS TO THE CITY. HOWEVER, HE SAID SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS SHOULD NOT BE DEVELOPED IN A WAY WHICH WOULD ALTER THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF THE SEA. HE CONCURRED WITH SUGGESTION MADE BY ONE DIPLOMAT PRESENT THAT SAFETY AND ANTI-POLLUTION MATTERS DEVELOPED BY THE THREE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE COORDINATED AND APPROVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION (IMCO).

(C) IN A MORE PHILOSOPHICAL VEIN, HE DEPLORED RISING TENDENCY OF STATES TO IMPOSE UNILATERAL MEASURES AFFECTING LAW OF THE SEA. IN HIS VIEW, THIS FUNDAMENTAL BODY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW HAD EXISTED FOR CENTURIES AND IT SHOULD NOT LIGHTLY BE CHANGED WITHOUT THE MOST CAREFUL DELIBERATION BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. SOMEWHAT INDISCREETLY HE SCOFFED AT INDONESIAN EFFORTS TO DEMAND NOTIFICATION BY U.S. AND SOVIET WARSHIPS PRIOR TO PASSING THROUGH THE STRAITS OF MALACCA AND IMPLIED THAT GOI EFFORTS TO IMPOSE NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS HAD BEEN PROPERLY IGNORED BY THE U.S. AND THE USSR.

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3. COMMENT. FROM FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM REMARKS, AS WELL AS COMMENTS MADE BY MFA DEPUTY SECRETARY TAN BOON SENG REPORTED REFTEL, GOS WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH GOM AND GOI MEASURES TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND PREVENT POLLUTION IN STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE, BUT WILL NOT AGREE TO ANY MEASURES WHICH WOULD TAMPER WITH EXISTING INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE SEA OR THROW A MONKEY WRENCH INTO THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS. CRONK

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